

“Delphy, the Guardian of Capo Granitola”: from stranded cetacean to a tool for Marine Biodiversity Communication

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This poster presents the science communication project “*Delphy, the Guardian of Capo Granitola*”, a scientific comic book developed by researchers of the CNR-IAS. The publication was conceived as an innovative tool to disseminate marine biodiversity research and to foster environmental awareness among students, citizens, and stakeholders, aligning with the goals of the III Forum of Biodiversity.

The comic is inspired by the real story of a stranded *Stenella coeruleoalba* (striped dolphin) recovered along the coast of southwestern Sicily, in the strategic area of Capo Granitola, at the center of the Strait of Sicily. Through a multidisciplinary approach combining marine biology, digital technologies, and visual storytelling, the carcass of the dolphin—traditionally treated as a special waste—was transformed into a scientific, educational, and cultural resource. Osteological reconstruction and 3D scanning allowed the creation of a digital model that became “Delphy,” the protagonist and narrative voice of the comic.

By blending factual scientific data with narrative elements rooted in local traditions—where cetaceans are known as the “Guardians of the lighthouse”—the comic connects science, territory, and cultural heritage. It illustrates the ecology of Mediterranean cetaceans, the threats posed by anthropogenic pressures (such as pollution, fishing activities, and maritime traffic), and the daily work of researchers, offering readers an accessible view of the “behind the scenes” of marine science. This transparency supports scientific literacy and enhances trust between science and society, contributing to the so-called “third mission” of research institutions.

Delphy demonstrates how creative media can effectively translate complex scientific knowledge into an inclusive and engaging language. The project highlights the potential of comics as tools for citizen science, environmental education, and biodiversity conservation, promoting the idea that knowledge is a fundamental form of respect for nature and a key driver for the sustainable future of the Mediterranean Sea.